

# Effective Communication with Persons of Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families

**Policy: 100.0170**

*Effective Date: December 24, 1990 Version: 1*

It is the policy of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to maintain a system whereby staff providing services or information in person, in writing or by telephone are able, during all hours of DCYF operation, to communicate effectively with LEP beneficiaries and to provide such services in an equal manner. DCYF is committed to serving its clients without discrimination on grounds of race, color or national origin. (Please refer to Policy 100.0140: Civil Rights: Federal Laws and Regulations Regarding Nondiscrimination.)

## Related Procedures

[Effective Communication with Persons of LEP](#)

## Effective Communication with Persons of Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

### **Procedure From Policy 100.0170: Effective Communication with Persons of Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

- A. A bilingual employee or other translator/interpreter should be utilized when providing services or information to an LEP person. This should be done without undue delay. An LEP person will not be required to provide or pay for the services of an interpreter. DCYF Staff will not rely on family members or friends of LEP persons to serve as interpreters unless the LEP person expressly requests such an arrangement. Please be aware that an adult family member or friend of the LEP beneficiary may not himself/herself be qualified to interpret the information accurately or completely. Young children should not be asked to translate or interpret.
- B. DCYF will identify and record the primary language of its clients at the earliest possible opportunity. Primary language shall mean language normally used by the client to conduct his/her day-to-day affairs. This would include the language spoken at home or the language used to conduct essential functions outside the home such as shopping, working, worshipping, etc.
- C. In order to alert DCYF staff to a client's primary language and the need for matching an LEP client with a bilingual worker or using an interpreter, DCYF will adhere to a procedure that contains, at a minimum, the following steps:
  - 1. For a client known to the Department as an LEP person, a notation shall be made in the RICHIST record that identifies the primary language of the client.
  - 2. For a client whose primary language is not known to DCYF, the Department will ask him/her to self-identify and will inform the client(s) that DCYF employees are able to communicate with LEP persons and that the client(s) is not required to bring his/her own interpreters. The Department will also use other feasible and effective means to identify its LEP clients including those who seek benefits, services or information from the Department for the first time. Once a client is identified as LEP, DCYF will enter the information in the RICHIST file,
  - 3. DCYF facilities will post and maintain at the reception areas a sign or signs in English, Spanish, and Portuguese reading as follows: "If you would prefer to communicate through a bilingual worker or an interpreter, please inform the receptionist. Your request will not unreasonably delay your receipt of services or benefits.";
  - 4. All LEP clients will be assigned to bilingual workers. If this is not possible, an interpreter will be used to ensure effective communication;
  - 5. If no bilingual worker is available, the assigned worker will make arrangements to obtain an outside interpreter by contacting the Language Bank (941-8479).